

Epi Update for Friday, September 6, 2019
Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology (CADE)
Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH)

Items for this week's Epi Update include:

- **Patient confusion: shingles and chickenpox**
- **Influenza season is coming – help IDPH improve influenza surveillance!**
- **Program area spotlight: Influenza and *Legionella***
- **In the news: Teenage boy goes blind after existing on Pringles, white bread, French fries**
- **In the news: New Zealand measles outbreak rises above 1,000 cases**
- **In the news: Whatever happened to... the 494 children who got HIV in 1 Pakistani city?**
- **Infographic: Know your risk of getting shingles and complications**

Patient confusion: shingles and chickenpox

Healthcare providers, please ensure that patients understand that while shingles cannot be passed from one person to another, the varicella-zoster virus can be spread from a person with active shingles to someone who is not immune, causing them to get chickenpox. A person with active shingles can spread the virus when the rash is in the blister-phase. A person is not considered infectious before the blisters appear or once the rash has developed crusts. Shingles is less contagious than chickenpox, and the risk of a person with shingles spreading the virus to others is low if the rash is covered.

To prevent the spread of chickenpox, patients with shingles should be advised to:

- keep the rash covered
- avoid touching or scratching the rash
- wash their hands often
- until the rash has developed crusts, avoid contact with pregnant women who have never had chickenpox or the chickenpox vaccine, premature or low birth weight infants, and people with weakened immune systems

Outbreaks of chickenpox (two or more linked cases) are required to be reported to public health. Individual cases of chickenpox or shingles are not reportable in Iowa.

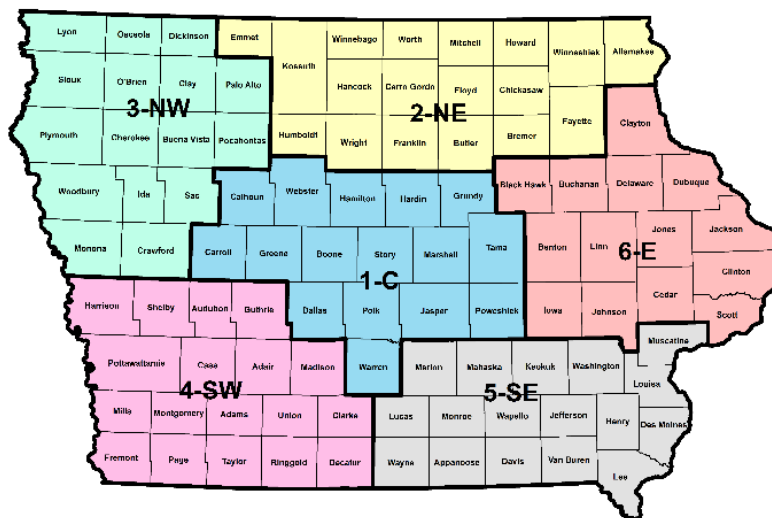
For additional information about shingles, including educational resources that you can use with your patients, visit www.cdc.gov/shingles/index.html.

Influenza season is coming – help IDPH improve influenza surveillance!

The 2019-20 influenza surveillance season officially starts September 29 and IDPH is recruiting providers to help monitor influenza activity around the state. Below is a summary of what is involved with each surveillance type and where current gaps exist (map below):

- **ILINet** is a national system coordinated by each state where outpatient health care providers report weekly the number of patients with influenza-like illness by age group as well as the total number of visits for any reason. Providers from anywhere in Iowa are welcome, but sites from the northwest, southeast and southwest regions are in most need of representation.
- **Hospital** sites report weekly the number of patients hospitalized with influenza by age group and the total number of hospitalizations for any reason. Sites are needed in the northwest, southwest and southeast regions.
- All **schools** are asked to report any single day when student absenteeism due to illness of any kind is 10% or greater. In addition, sentinel schools report weekly the total number of students absent due to illness and the total expected enrollment. Sentinel schools are needed in the southeast, southwest, northeast and northwest areas.
- IDPH also tracks **respiratory virus testing** data from a weekly survey conducted by SHL as well as individual specimens submitted to SHL for confirmation or subtyping. Contact Jeff Benfer at 319-335-4276 to participate in the respiratory virus testing survey. For more information or resources related to influenza testing at SHL, visit www.shl.uiowa.edu/dcd/influenza/index.xml.

If you are interested in becoming a sentinel site, contact Andy Weigel at 515-322-1937 or andy.weigel@idph.iowa.gov.



Program area spotlight: Influenza and *Legionella*

IDPH collaborates with SHL and partners throughout Iowa to monitor and control influenza activity. The Iowa Influenza Surveillance Network gathers information on outpatient influenza-like illness, public health and clinical laboratory testing, long-term care facility outbreaks, influenza-related hospitalization and mortality, and school absenteeism. IDPH publishes influenza surveillance reports throughout the year, including weekly during the influenza season. IDPH also leads long-term care influenza outbreak investigations, with local public health assistance as capacity allows. IDPH investigated 90 long-term care influenza outbreaks in 2017-18 and 53 in 2018-19. For more information about the influenza program, visit idph.iowa.gov/influenza.

IDPH works with local, state and national public health departments, clinical and public health laboratories, and healthcare providers to detect sources associated with legionellosis cases

and provide guidance for reducing the risk from implicated sources. Potential sources include health care facilities, overnight stays in hotels or other public rental properties, and hot tubs or other sources of water aeration. When a case of legionellosis is reported, local public health interviews the patient to identify potential sources of exposure during the incubation period. IDPH reviews this information to identify multiple cases with the same exposure, persons who were in one facility for the entire incubation period, or overnight stays at public accommodations. In 2018, confirmed legionellosis cases in Iowa increased to 64, nearly double the three-year average, including four potential healthcare-associated cases. Investigations into potential healthcare-associated cases include ongoing patient and environmental monitoring and various steps to prevent spread, as needed. Iowa also reported to CDC or other states 21 out-of-state overnight exposures to public accommodations or healthcare facilities. For more information about legionellosis, visit www.cdc.gov/legionella/index.html.

In the news: Teenage boy goes blind after existing on Pringles, white bread, French fries

www.cnn.com/2019/09/03/health/poor-diet-blindness-scli-intl/index.html

In the news: New Zealand measles outbreak rises above 1,000 cases

www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-49589620

In the news: Whatever happened to... the 494 children who got HIV in 1 Pakistani city?

www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2019/08/30/755543723/whatever-happened-to-the-494-children-who-got-hiv-in-1-pakistani-city

Infographic: Know your risk of getting shingles and complications



To view in full size, visit www.cdc.gov/shingles/images/shingles-risks-complications.jpg.

Have a healthy and happy week!
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